

AROUND THE CORPS IN BRIEF

Marines bring big attitude to missions

AL-FAW PENNINSULA, Iraq — Charlie Battery, 11th Marine Regiment, the artillery unit attached to Battalion Landing Team 1/1, left its heavy artillery on board the USS Peleliu and took up rifles to form a provisional rifle company during Operation Sweeney conducted by the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) during October here.

Marines conducted anti-smuggling operations that included mounted and dismounted patrols, raids, and vessel boardings, and assisted in humanitarian operations conducted in the city while ashore Oct. 11-26, according to 1st. Sgt. Martin Bock, battery first sergeant for Charlie Battery. The battery trained in the southern Al-Faw peninsula, primarily in the city of Al-Faw.

The Battery, which is comprised of a gun platoon of canoneers and a headquarters platoon of mechanics, motor transport specialists, communicators and fire direction control specialists, usually operates six M198 Howitzers, the heaviest firepower the ground combat element brings to the MEU.

“The Marines are familiar with but not trained daily on infantry skills,” said Bock. “The missions they performed as a provisional rifle company during the past operation were out of the norm for the battery attached to a MEU.”

Although the tactics may have been uncommon to the Marines from the battery, they were instrumental in the success of the joint operation conducted with the British-led Multi-National Division (South East), the command the 13th MEU (SOC) reported to for Operation Sweeney. Battery Marines were involved in raids during which weapons were seized, vessels boarded and locals suspected of oil smuggling detained. They also assisted explosive ordnance disposal Marines with several “shots” in the area that removed unexploded ordnance and munitions found while conducting missions, according to Bock.

Battery Marines also assisted with the humanitarian operations conducted in the city, according to Bock. The Battery commanding officer, Capt. Matthew Nation, provided a vital link to the local population by attending town counsel meetings and establishing a connection with the local leaders that was instrumental in coordinating the humanitarian assistance operations led by MEU Service Support Group-13.

1/6 spouses get a taste of ship life

NAVAL STATION NORFOLK, Va. — For the spouses of deployed Marines and sailors, it is often difficult to visualize

their deployed loved ones’ descriptions of life aboard ship. However, a group of spouses from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit’s ground combat element, Battalion Landing Team 1st Bn., 6th Marines, won’t have that problem after a visit here. They were treated to a tour of the ships — USS Wasp, USS Shreveport, and USS Whidbey Island — on which their husbands will deploy early next year.

Upon reaching Norfolk, the approximately 30 spouses were divided up according to which ship their husband will deploy on and then given a tour of the vessel by members of the ship’s crew.

The battalion’s Key Volunteer coordinator, Alicia Hill, said the trip should go far in preparing the spouses for the deployment.

The upcoming deployment holds a particular sense of uncertainty for the wives of BLT 1/6 Marines. For the past several years, the battalion has regularly deployed to the Far East as part of the Unit Deployment Program, but has not been with a MEU since the late 1990s, so having their husbands aboard ship will be a new experience.

During the visit to the WASP, for example, the spouses were shown the main areas of the ship including a typical work space, the enlisted mess deck, well deck, vehicle storage, gym, medical, flight deck, enlisted and staff non-commissioned officer berthing, and the ship’s bridge.

The visit to the USS Wasp, USS Shreveport, and USS Whidbey Island is but one facet of the preparations BLT 1/6 is conducting to ensure its spouses are ready for their husbands’ departure. Along with family days, monthly meetings of the Key Volunteers, and newsletters from the command, BLT 1/6 hopes to make the difficult job of being a Marine wife a bit easier.

22nd MEU honored for actions in OEF

CAMP LEJEUNE, NC — Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England recently awarded the Navy Meritorious Unit

Making a little rain ...



Sgt. Richard J. Kulleck

MCAS MIRAMAR, Calif. — A CH-53 Super Stallion from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, the Wolfpack, dumps the Bambi Bucket in an attempt to hit its target here. This training was conducted to complete their requirements for California Department of Forestry certification. Once certified, the pilots are authorized to provide air support to ground fire fighters as they fight wildfires.

Commendation to the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit for its service in the Global War on Terrorism during its 2002 deployment.

The 22nd MEU (then designated as “Special Operations Capable”) deployed from here Feb. 22, 2002, aboard the amphibious assault ships USS Wasp, USS Trenton, and USS Oak Hill, and consisted of its Command Element, Battalion Landing Team 2nd Bn., 6th Marines, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 261 (Reinforced), and MEU Service

Support Group 22.

During its six-month deployment, the MEU spent 143 days in the Central Command Theater, supporting a wide range of counter- and anti-terrorist operations and exercises. Most of these missions remain classified, but the MEU did conduct operations in Afghanistan, a bilateral training exercise in

Jordan, and training and humanitarian civil affairs projects in Djibouti.

Marines and sailors directly assigned to the 22nd MEU or Amphibious Squadron Four at any time between Feb. 22, 2002, and Aug. 30, 2002 are authorized the MUC.

The MUC award citation specifically mentioned the MEU’s rapid reinforcement of the U.S. Consulate, Karachi, Pakistan in the wake of a terrorist bombing there and the unit’s execution of simultaneous, complex missions that required the MEU to conduct split-amphibious ready group operations.

This marks the 22nd MEU’s sixth award of the MUC since its activation as the 22nd Marine Amphibious Unit Dec. 1, 1982. Prior awards of the MUC were for the MEU’s deployments in the mid to late 1980s, service in Albania during Operation Silver Wake, its 1997 deployment to West Africa and the Adriatic Sea, and deployments with the Sixth and Fifth Fleets in 1998 and 2000, respectively.

Marines get into Halloween spirit

ABOARD USS PELELIU — Marines and sailors aboard the USS Peleliu got into the Halloween spirit as they ran in a 5k Halloween Fun Run on the ship’s flight deck during the Fighting 13th’s transit through the Arabian Gulf Oct. 31.

Service members dressed up in costumes during the run to compete for the best costume and \$25 prize. At the sound of the ship’s loud horn, participants began their 10 laps around the flight deck.

Although runners had to struggle against the wind, which blew against them, many were still able to enjoy the fun and relaxed atmosphere of the event, according to Todd R. DeJulius, fitness boss, Morale, Welfare and Recreation, USS Peleliu.

Many of the costume participants created their innovative costumes from materials they borrowed, found or brought on board.

Sergeant Jodi L. Dube, Air Combat Element embark chief, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 163 (Reinforced), created her beer can costume from an extra sheet she brought along with her for the long deployment.

“Creating the costume gave me something to do at night,” said Dube, who spent three nights designing and painting her costume. “I wanted to participate in the Halloween festivity to keep myself from getting bored.”

Firefighters contain Pendleton fire

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — A brush fire that erupted aboard base, tore through military training areas and threatened off-base homeowners in De Luz was 100 percent contained Oct. 28.

The Roblar II Fire, the first in what became a series of wildfires still scorching large swaths of the San Diego area early Oct. 29, left the base and surrounding areas relatively unscathed compared with a devastating toll elsewhere.

As of Oct. 28, the Roblar II Fire had burned 8,592 acres but had damaged no structures, according to Scott Simpson, a Camp Pendleton fire inspector.

“Seven firefighters were treated for minor injuries,” Simpson said. “Two were treated for second-degree burns.”

In contrast, fires elsewhere in San Diego County left 12 people dead, according to the Medical Examiner’s Office of San Diego. The fires also destroyed 1,100 homes and blackened more than 375,000 acres, according to Adriana Uribe of the San Diego County Sheriff’s Office.

The Roblar II Fire started in the Zulu Impact Area aboard base Oct. 21. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Compiled by the MCRD Parris Island Public Affairs Office